

MINUTES
Underhill Conservation Commission
July 14, 2014
Underhill Town Hall

Present: Trevor Squirrell (chair), Karen McKnight, Pat Lamphere, Nancy McRae, Merianne O'Grady, David Rogers, Dan Steinbauer, and Pat Sabalis

(**Note:** Each individual present was given an agenda for the current meeting and a copy of the 6-9-14 UCC Meeting Notes. A sign-in sheet was also passed around the table.)

Opening Remarks: Chairperson Trevor Squirrell introduced himself and welcomed all those present to the meeting of the Underhill Conservation Commission. He mentioned that as of tonight, the Commission has a total of eight members. (Member and Vice-Chair Barbara Greene not present.) We have struggled with low numbers for quite some time. The dissolution of the Underhill Trails Committee has helped add new people to our numbers, since several present tonight who were formerly on the UTC have decided to join the UCC (Pat Lamphere, Nancy McRae, and Karen McKnight). The new UCC members and their terms of office are as follows: Pat Lamphere (3 years), Nancy McRae (4 years), Karen McKnight (3 years), Dave Rogers (1 year), and Dan Steinbauer (2 years).

Per Trevor, the primary focus of this meeting was to introduce incoming members to those already on the UCC, and visa versa and discuss a work-plan moving forward.

6-7-14 UCC Plant Sale: Trevor explained that the annual Plant Sale is the major fund-raiser for the UCC. It is a very efficient method of raising money, since the actual sale usually takes less than 30 minutes, and within that time, most of the plants are gone. This year, UCC netted \$700. Blueberry plants, which UCC purchased wholesale, brought in the most revenue with 120 plants sold at \$9.00/each. The other two sources of money were donated plants and digging rights, both supplied generously by community members.

Invasive Education / Outreach Project: Per Trevor, invasive terrestrial plant species are an important, and growing, issue for the Town of Underhill. UCC had hoped to offer a short educational workshop after the June 7th Plant Sale at Moore Park, directly across the road from the Town Hall. However, this did not occur. So, the Commission decided to focus on developing a series of educational workshops and work-parties to address this critical problem.

New UCC member, Dan Steinbauer, informed the Commission that he would like to volunteer his time and resources to educate UCC members, and help the Commission develop educational outreach programs on invasives. He has completed the Forest Pest First Detector Program, through the UVM Extension, during which he was trained to detect and monitor initial signs of insect invasion into local tree communities. This is a national program, offered through partnerships between university Extension Services, and state and federal agencies. The three insect invaders which are rapidly devastating forest species are the Asian long-horned beetle,

emerald ash borer, and hemlock woolly adelgid. Per Dan, so far only the latter species has arrived in VT. It is currently limited to the southern part of the state. But there is growing concern about the spread of this species, and the introduction of the other two insects, throughout VT. The VT Department of Agriculture and UVM Extension are working on an 'alert system' of preparedness, to be implemented with the first sign of these pests. This system would be similar to the National Weather Service's 'storm spotter' program.

In terms of UCC implementing an invasive education / outreach project, various suggestions were put forward by those present: the idea of a Town "Conservation Fair"; adding information about invasives to the Town of Underhill website; a series of workshops and work-parties on Town lands; educational outreach to local schools; and an educational booth at the Harvest Market. It was also pointed out that the local CAP (Community Agricultural Project) is often seeking topics for its workshops, and someone from UCC could offer to do a presentation.

Timelines were discussed, and it was decided that UCC should offer at least two workshops - one in the Fall and one the following Spring. The focus would be on both the insect and terrestrial plant invasives. Participants could then be enlisted to do work projects in the Spring, when the invasive plants are first appearing and are easier to remove. The Town's Cranebrook Trail has an infestation of Japanese knotweed and thus would be a good location. A booth at Harvest Market, followed by a workshop the next weekend was initially suggested. However, it was agreed that October is a busy month, and turn-out to such a workshop might be minimal.

Consensus led to the following proposed schedule:

- 1) Education-outreach presence at Harvest Market in October
- 2) Initial workshop (9 a.m. to noon) in early November, possibly followed by an additional workshop that month.
- 3) Interim projects involving community groups (Scouts, schools, etc) with an interest in invasives
- 4) 2015 Spring workshop, including fieldwork

Other possibilities would be invasive work on Green-Up Day by trained individuals, developing a core of knowledgeable Townspeople to educate their neighbors and organize work-parties within their neighborhoods.

Concern was expressed regarding the spread of invasive plants by both private parties and the Town's Road Crew through road-side mowing / excavating / filling. Questions arose as to whether Town's road crew has been educated regarding the life-cycle and consequences of invasives within the Town of Underhill.

Cranebrook Trail Ordinance: Trevor explained that, contrary to what was understood by UCC members prior to the 6-7-14 special meeting, new litigation involving the Cranebrook Trail has been initiated. Therefore, any action on the current Underhill Trails Ordinance has been tabled until further notice.

Town Plan 2015 - Natural Resources section: Trevor spoke briefly regarding the upcoming

review of the Underhill Town Plan, which is on a 5-year timetable. The Planning Commission has assigned the Natural Resources section of the 2015 Town Plan to the UCC for evaluation. Since the Commission needs to start this process over the coming months, Trevor will provide each member with the 2010 version and accompanying commentaries. He pointed out that our work will be more of an update than a rewrite. There is new legislation that must be incorporated and new topics to be included. Further discussion will follow at the next meeting,

Approval of Minutes - June 9th, 2014: Since a quorum of UCC members was not present at the 6-9-14 meeting, the proceedings of said meeting cannot be considered official UCC Minutes. Therefore, no vote of approval can be cast, and they will instead be classified as UCC Meeting Notes. These Notes will be posted on the Town of Underhill website.

New Business: No new business was presented.

Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was moved by David Rogers and seconded by Karen McKnight. The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 11, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Underhill Town Hall

Respectfully submitted, Merianne O'Grady, UCC member, 7-16-14. **DRAFT**

Final
[Signature] 8/11/14

